PRIORITY

(Security Classification)

DO NOT TYPE IN THIS SPACE

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

773.5-MSP/2-759

FROM : Tripoli, Libya

148
DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

February 7, 1959
DATE

REF :

This Document must be Returned to the RMR Central Files

For Dept. Use Only	ACTION REC'D	DEPT. INFO OTHER
	AF-5 2/14	RMR x ICA-10 IRC-8 EUR-5 w/msc-1 ICA-10 USIA-10 OSD-4 ARMY-4 AIR-1 NAVY-3

SUBJECT: Ltr. of the Libyan-American Economic Aid Agreement of September 9, 1954.

The Embassy transmits the enclosed reproducible copies of (1) an editorial which appeared in the Tripoli weekly news of February 1, 1959, and (2) an account of a Parliamentary debate which took place on January 27, 1959, as reported in the same issue of the Tripoli weekly news. Both items concern the forthcoming discussions on the revision of the Libyan-American Economic Aid Agreement of September 9, 1954.

Although the Tripoli weekly news is often highly critical of the Libyan Government, as well as of Western countries, articles or editorials which represent the Government's point of view usually appear in this paper as well as views in opposition reflecting those of Western countries. This editorial (Enclosure No. 1), for instance, was widely regarded as the Government's preliminary answer to, or rebuttal of, the statement which was made by the U.S. Ambassador in his note of reply to the Libyan Government's note of November 15, 1958, in regard to renegotiation of the Base Rights Agreement. The reporting officer was not privately seen or heard to criticize the publication of this editorial or the principle involved in the Ambassador's note, that the Libyan-American agreement pertains to a joint Libyan-American contribution to the defense of the free world and is not a mere rental agreement. The top officials of the Libyan Government were well aware of this point, and some, at least, of the members of the Libyan Government must be aware of it, but both Governments have evidently avoided making it public knowledge in Libya. It is therefore the editorial opinion that the Tripoli weekly news would have printed an editorial like this only if it is known beyond question (or a reasonable assumption) that the Government who has knowledge of the Ambassador's note.

While the Tripoli weekly is really interested in only two publications of the press in Libya (or three now), i.e., more one, as no U.S. control over it, the ability of members of Parliament to make a substantial presentation of the Libyan view toward the Libyan-American Air Base Agreement is well illustrated by Enclosure No. 2, the Tripoli weekly news's report of a question put to the Government in Parliament by Mr. Ali-Ahmida Bugaighis (Bugaighis, Bugaighis), the Government's most vocal critic. The report clearly illustrates the Government's attitude toward the Parliament, and [illegible] for active [illegible] year. The conflict arises from the Government's knowledge [illegible] is in opposition and its reluctance [illegible] to avoid it

REVIEWED BY Rasi 5/6/82

Ltr. of Trans.

Enclosures:
1. Tripoli weekly news, Feb. 1, 1959.
2. Tripoli weekly news, Jan. 27, 1959.

FREPORTER

TO: ACTION COPY — DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The action office must return this permanent record copy to D&R files with an endorsement of action taken.

DEPT.
REC'D
FA OR IOA

AF MESSAGE CENTER

R 9/2 553

773.5-MSP/2-759

CONFIDENTIAL
(Classification)

DECLASSIFIED

to put through any measure it wishes, with or without adequate and truthful explanation. The fear arises from the Government's inability to explain or defend its policies either through inexperience or lack of conviction. It is unfortunate that there is no one at the Cabinet level who is an effective speaker and who has the courage of his government's convictions.

It is even more unfortunate that those members of Parliament who are willing and able to stand up to the Government (which for Libya's sake badly needs a conscience) either have objectives in mind, the realization of which would be detrimental to U.S. Government (and in fact Libyan) interests, or feel that they must use real or fancied defects in Libyan-Western relations as their principal points of attack.

For the Ambassador:

Edwin L. Smith
Counselor of Embassy

Copy to: Embassy, Tripoli (E)

CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED
Classification

Editorial from The Cyrenaica Weekly News
February 1, 1959

"OBJECT OF THE U.S. MISSION"

"At a recent press conference, the Premier stated that the Government would make every effort to insist on its rights and guard its interests during the forthcoming talks to revise the Libyan-American Agreement of 1954. This statement confirms that the Government will adopt a strong and frank attitude reflecting the wishes which that the Libyan-American Agreement be reviewed and amended in such a manner as to achieve the purposes for which Libya accepted the principle of alliance with certain great powers and granted strategical concessions permitting them to establish military bases.

"By means of these agreements and treaties, Libya expects to get economic benefits which would assist her development and help to raise the standard of living. These aims are still more important to us than the crushing of Communism or the defence of the free world. Communism is not a danger to Libya for the simple reason that it does not exist here nor is there anyone advocating its principles here. On the other hand, Libya does not think that defending the free world has stopped aggressive plots and imperialist domination over small countries which, to recently have supported the aims of the free world. For this, it is clear that Libya views its agreement with the United States from a completely different angle to that of America. The Americans believe that to ensure the safety of the free world, it is necessary to establish military bases in this country, which is considered an important defensive area of this free world, and that the financial assistance presented in accordance with 1954 Agreement is not balanced against the use of these bases but part of the assistance presented to under-developed countries in accordance with the Foreign Aid Programme aimed at developing the economies of these countries.

"This could be one reason why Libyans view this assistance with dissatisfaction at a time when other countries which have American bases obtain tens of millions of dollars yearly in return for the establishment of these bases in their country. On the other hand, the way adopted in spending American assistance funds in Libya has not led to the achievement of any economic progress and has not benefited the country to expected extent.

"We believe that the circumstances in which the Libyan-American Agreement was signed did not allow the Libyan negotiator to realize the importance of Libya's full interests. Libya, that's views should now take into account the changing circumstances in this country, should be more realistic, should modify its assistance as a gift presented 'gratis'.

"The aims of Libya in signing the 1954 Agreement are based upon the assurance of this country's interests and rights and the possibility of benefiting in a practical manner from the American assistance which should be presented in a way more in line with the benefits which America enjoys in this country. Thus Libya may carry out projects aiming at economic development and social progress. At the same time it would give the public a good reason for the presence of military bases in Libya."

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

(Classification)

DECLASSIFIED

(Excerpt from "Discussions at Parliament", Page 5, The Cyrenaica Weekly News, February 1, 1959.)

"The Amendment to the Libyan-American Agreement"

"The third question, put to the Prime Minister by MP Abdelaziz Zegallay, concerned steps taken by the Government in regard to amending the Libyan-American Agreement.

"In replying to this question on behalf of the Government, Sayed Omar el Baruni, the Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, said that the Government had stated in the Speech from the Throne that it would enter into negotiations with the American Government to revise certain points in the Agreement between the two countries. The results -- the Under-Secretary added -- would be presented to the House whenever possible.

"MP Zegallay replied that this was too short an answer. The circumstances in which the Agreement was made were not favourable to the Libyan people, especially as it had been made whilst the country was in a state of emergency. Despite all this, the American Government had not kept the promise made in the Agreement. America -- he continued -- had promised to execute beneficial projects in the field of economic development, year by year, as stated in the letters exchanged and attached to the Agreement. The insignificant amounts allocated by America for the "so-called" Libyan economic development projects, had proved of no benefit whatsoever, he continued, and the Libyan-American Agreement should therefore be cancelled. This firstly because the Agreement was of no benefit to Libya and secondly because it was made between two countries of different status. "Such agreements are void, according to the resolutions taken by the Bandung Conference and the Afro-Asian Conference", Sayed Zegallay continued, "and I can assure the Government that this is the opinion of every Libyan".

"As I am sure that the Government is not courageous enough to cancel this Agreement, I see no alternative but to request, in the name of the people, that the imminent negotiations with America should be conducted with the object of a substantial amendment and not conducted in a similar manner to the case of the Anglo-Libyan Treaty." Mr Zegallay then mentioned a few points which he considered the Government should bring into action. They were:

1) that American air bases be moved from the neighbourhood of Tripoli or any other inhabited site.

2) that all obsolete missile bases be moved.

3) that all goods, except those used for military purposes, should be subject to Customs duties.

4) that American citizens should be subject to Libyan laws and Libyan Civil and Criminal Courts.

UNCLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

CLASSIFIED
(Classification)

DECLASSIFIED

b) that American air bases in Libya should be controlled in order to prevent any non-Americans from entering or leaving the Country through them.

"The Premier then said that the Government's reply was concise and at the same time, to the point, whereas MP Zegallay had digressed from the subject, thus contravening the House's regulations, and asked the President of the House to ensure that they were observed.

"MP Khalifa Abdulkader then objected to the Premier's observations, stating that he considered them a slur to the House's Presidency and members.

"The President then said that the Question Time was over and requested that the remaining questions be postponed until the next meeting."

CLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED